

BURIED AT THE FOOT OF THE HILLS

In the year 1864, nearly three thousand converts to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sailed from Europe to America under the direction of missionaries who were returning to their homeland. Such a man was John M. Kay. He was a large man weighing about 250 pounds and the weather was extremely warm. The Civil War was ending and some of the troops encountered by the emigrants on the way to the outfitting camps at Wyoming, Nebraska, manifested much bitterness towards them. At one point they drove the emigrants through a river with the rain descending in torrents, which exposure caused much sickness and some deaths in the company. After reaching the point where he was relieved of his command by the arrival of the Church teams from Salt Lake Valley, the devoted elder fell sick—some said with mountain fever. He traveled on with the rest, however, and seemed to improve up to the evening before his death, when he stood in his tent door and sang, as he had often sung before, to cheer the hearts of his fellow pilgrims to Zion. He died suddenly and apparently without pain, at 2 o'clock in the morning of September 27, 1864, at a point seven miles west of Little Laramie, in what was then the Territory of Colorado. They buried him at the foot of the Black Hills, taking a board from each wagon until sufficient lumber was procured to make a coffin in which to enclose his remains.

—D.U.P. Files

